

1 Alma 19:1-7*Trance*

From what we can deduce from scriptural writ, it appears that a trance is a state in which the body and its functions become quiescent in order that the full powers of the Spirit may be centered on the revelations of heaven. Freed from the fetters of a mortal body, man's spirit can be ushered into the divine presence; it can hear what otherwise could not be heard and see what otherwise could not be seen."

Joseph Fielding McConkie and Robert L. Millet, *Doctrinal Commentary*, 3:140.

2 Alma 19:6*The Veil*

Without the veil, we would lose that precious insulation, thus interfering with our mortal probation and maturation. Without the veil, our brief mortal walk in a darkening world would lose its meaning—for one would scarcely carry the flashlight of faith at noonday and in the presence of the Light of the World!

Without the veil, we could not experience the gospel of work and the sweat of our brow. If we had the security of having already entered into God's rest....

And how could we learn about obedience if we were shielded from the consequences of our disobedience? And how could we learn patience under pressure if we did not experience pressure and waiting?...

The Veil keeps the first, second, and third estates separate.... The veil avoids having things "compound in one" (2 Nephi 2:11)—to our everlasting detriment. We are cocooned, as it were, in order that we might truly choose. Once, long ago, we chose to come to this very setting where we could choose. It was an irrevocable choice! And the veil is the guarantor that our ancient choice is honored....

Thus the veil stands—not to forever shut us out—but as a reminder of God's tutoring and patient love for us. Neal A. Maxwell, *Ensign*, Oct. 1980 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1980], 31.

3 Alma 19:6*Light*

I recently recalled a historic meeting in Jerusalem about 17 years ago. It was regarding the lease for the land on which the Brigham Young University's Jerusalem Center for Near Eastern Studies was later built. Before this lease could be signed, President Ezra Taft Benson and Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, then president of Brigham Young University, agreed with the Israeli government on behalf of the Church and the university not to proselyte in Israel. You might wonder why we agreed not to proselyte. We were required to do so in order to get the building permit to build that magnificent building which stands in the historic city of Jerusalem. To our knowledge the Church and BYU have scrupulously and honorable kept that nonproselyting commitment. After the lease had been signed, one of our friends insightfully remarked, "Oh, we know that you are not going to proselyte, but what are you going to do about the light that is in their eyes?" He was referring to our students who were studying in Israel.

What was that light in their eyes which was so obvious to our friend? The Lord Himself gave the answer: "And the light which shineth, which giveth you light, is through him who enlighteneth *your eyes*, which is the same light that quickeneth your understandings" (D&C 88:11; emphasis added)....

This light shows in our countenances as well as in our eyes.

James E. Faust, *Ensign*, Nov. 2005 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2005], 20

4 Alma 19:1-7

King Lamoni's experience of being filled with the Spirit of the Lord was something he had never felt before. It so overcome his natural body that he fell to the ground in a state of unconsciousness. It is interesting to note that similar experiences were had by Alma, Zeezrom, and King Lamoni's father. The following chart reviews these experiences.

Individual	What Initiated Conversion	The Results
Alma (Mosiah 27)	He was visited by an angel of God.	He became weak and could not speak nor move for three days. (Alma 36)
Zeezrom	Alma and Amulek preached the gospel to him with great power.	He became weak and was confined to bed with a burning fever. (Alma 15)
King Lamoni (Alma 17-19)	Ammon taught him the gospel.	He was overcome by the Spirit and fell to the earth as if he were dead.
King Lamoni's Father (Alma 22)	Aaron taught him the gospel.	He was struck as if he was dead.

The similarity of these experiences seems to suggest that the Spirit of the Lord may have a very dramatic effect on those who have been especially wicked, Alma 19:6 explains this principle.

Book of Mormon Student Manual: Religion 121 and 122 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1979], 247-248.

5 Alma 19:9-10

Faith

Of all our needs, I think the greatest is an increase of faith.

President Gordon B. Hinckley

6 The shield of faith is best fabricated in a cottage industry. While the shield can be polished in classes in the Church and activities, it is meant to be handcrafted in the home and fitted to each individual.

Boyd K. Packer, "Do Not Fear", *Ensign*, May, 2004

7 Alma 19:12

Blessed be the name of God

To praise God is one thing; to praise *the name* of God is another. God's name is a symbol of his essence, power, and authority. To praise his name is to do more than acknowledge the verity of his existence; it is to assert

that salvation comes only in and through his holy name. It is to attest that no proper prayer can be offered save it be offered in his name; it is to acknowledge that all gospel ordinances must be performed by the authority of his name; it is to profess that the gospel cannot be taught save it is taught in his name, that miracles, healings, prophecies—indeed, “all things”—must be properly done in the sacred name of Christ if they are to be recognized and upheld in the heavens. (See D&C 46:31)

Robert L. Millett and Joseph Fielding McConkie, *In His Holy Name*, Chapters 1, 5-6.

8 **Alma 19:12**
Seen My Redeemer

“At one of these meetings... when we were all together, Joseph having given instructions, and while engaged in silent prayer, kneeling,... a personage walked through the room.... I saw him and suppose the others did, and Joseph answered that is Jesus, the Son of God.... Afterward Joseph told us to resume our former position in prayer, which we did. Another person came through; He was surrounded as with a flame of fire.... The Prophet Joseph said this was the Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ. I saw Him.... This appearance was so grand and overwhelming that it seemed I should melt down in His Presence, and the sensation was so powerful that it thrilled through my whole system and I felt it in the marrow of my bones. The Prophet Joseph said: Brethren now you are prepared to be Apostles of Jesus Christ, for you have seen both the Father and the Son.”

Zebedee Coltrin, in Lyndon W. Cook, *Revelations of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 187-88.

9 **Alma 19:16-18**
Abish

If for no other reason, Abish, the Lamanitish woman, is distinguished because her actual name appears in the Book of Mormon. She is one of only three women in the entire Nephite-Lamanite-Mulekite-Jaradite records to have her name in the Book of Mormon. The other two are Sariah, the wife of Lehi (1 Nephi 2:5), and Isabel, the harlot (Alma 39:3).

The brief account of the conversion of Abish is not clear. The statement that Abish had been converted “unto to the Lord for many years, on account of a remarkable vision of her father” (Alma 19:16) may have two possible interpretations. One interpretation is that Abish herself had this vision and in her vision she saw her father. Another possible interpretation is that the vision was actually had by the father of Abish. Regardless of which interpretation is correct, this conversion of Abish plays an important role in converting large numbers of Lamanites.

Ludlow, *Companion*, p.207

10 **Alma 19:16-17**
Converted to the Lord

Once as President Kimball entered a missionary meeting in West Berlin he overheard one missionary comment to another, “Today I converted two people to the Church and they’re going to be baptized this next week.”

Spencer put his hand on the startled missionary’s shoulder and said,

“Young man, I couldn’t help overhearing you say you had converted two members to the Church today. I want you to know that you’ve never converted anybody in your life. And what’s more, you never will. Conversion is an act of the Spirit and you’re only an instrument in the hands of the Lord to bring this person into acceptance of the gospel.”

Then Spencer hugged him, kissed him on the cheek, and expressed appreciation for his good efforts.

Spencer W. Kimball; as quoted in Edward L. Kimball, *Lengthen Your Stride: The Presidency of Spencer W. Kimball* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2005], 105-106.

11 Alma 19:22, 23
Divine Protection

Missionary Experience of Joseph Edward Gubler, Sr.

This spiritual missionary experience of my grandfather, Joseph Edward Gubler, happened while he was in the mission field while traveling without purse or script in Mississippi. This experience happened near the end of his mission in the year 1906 and was told to my grandmother and father, who was eleven years of age when Grandfather returned home.

This experience bears record to the truthfulness of the scripture found in D&C 24:18, "And thou shalt take no purse or script, neither staves, neither two coats, for the church shall give unto thee in the very hour what thou needest for food and for raiment and for shoes and for money and for script."

My grandfather and his companion had been traveling several days and had many doors slammed in their faces and had been unable to obtain any food or nourishment of any kind. They were very weak and discouraged since they were tracting in an area in Mississippi which was very hostile and bitter towards the Church.

As they were walking down one of these country lanes, my grandfather went over to the side of the road and knelt down behind some bushes and proceeded to pour out his heart to the Lord, explaining their need of nourishment and telling the Lord of their desire to serve him, but he explained that if they were to do this they needed food to give them strength to go on. He then arose and as they came onto the road they noticed a white object in the middle of the road. When they got to it they picked it up and found it to be a warm loaf of bread wrapped in a white dish towel. He said, "I don't ever remember anything tasting so good!" They gave praise to their Heavenly Father for this miracle.

Grandfather had packed the dishtowel in his suitcase and after returning home Grandmother was unpacking for him. When she came across the dish towel, she exclaimed, "Joe, where did you get my dish towel?" He then related this account to her. Grandmother then related this story: "I had baked several loaves of bread that day and had taken them out of the oven and placed the loaves on a dish towel. I then went out on some errands and upon returning I noticed that a loaf of bread, along with the dish towel, was missing. I thought someone had come along who had need of the bread, and since I was not home had gone ahead and taken it and would return the towel later and explain their need. I then put it out of my mind and never thought any more about it until now, two months later, having found the same dish towel in your suit case."

Alden M. Higgs, "From Battlefield to Mission Field," *Ensign*, July, 2004, p. 24-27

12 It got dark, yet there was a full moon. Finally, I turned to Elder Hales and said: "We are in trouble. I think we should stop and pray." Leaving the road, we knelt and pleaded with the Lord, asking Him to guide us to a home where we could find something to eat and drink, get a good night's rest, and be able to take care of our other needs. Then back on the road we went.

The next home we saw was set back off the road to our left. It was dark and vacant. I turned to Elder Hales and said, "This is where we will stay tonight." The door was ajar. We walked into a bare room. The light of the full moon showed us a pile of old gunnysacks in the corner. Dividing the gunnysacks and taking them out on the porch, we shook out the dust and dirt. Then we laid them on the floor to make two beds and put our raincoats on top.

Sleep did not come to me for a couple of hours, even though my body was very tired and my throat was dry as cotton. I silently prayed that heavenly Father would help us meet our needs. As I lay there, my mind drifted back to the vivid images of the war that came alive in my mind every so often. I finally relaxed and settled into a deep sleep.

A Shiny Bucket

When I awoke the next morning, Elder Hales was already up. As I said a silent prayer, asking Father in Heaven to assist us in our needs, I heard Elder Hales yell: "Elder Higgs! Come outside and down the cellar steps. See what I have found!"

Pushing away old spider webs, I walked down the steps onto the dirt floor of the cellar. There on one top shelf was a big bottle of canned raspberries. There was no dust on the bottle! We tested it to make sure it was still sealed and then opened it. After saying a blessing, we passed it back and forth, drinking it all down. It surely tasted good.

We climbed out of the cellar and found the well. Sitting upon a platform of wood next to the well was a shiny new bucket with a new rope wound around it. The rope wasn't even tied to the bucket handle. After we tied the rope to the handle, we lowered the bucket into the well, sloshing it back and forth until it filled. We then let it down deeper into the cold water. Bringing it up, we took turns drinking the sweet cold water from this brand-new bucket.

Seeing a dishpan by the well, I mentioned to Elder Hales that we should go back into the house to see if we could find a match to build a fire, heat some water, have a bath, wash clothes, and shave.

Back at the house, I immediately went to the kitchen and searched all the drawers and shelves. Nothing! Then Elder Hales yelled from the bedroom for me to come, saying in the same breath, "You won't believe this unless you see it."

I went in. He was pointing to a big spider web in the corner. In the very center of the web hung one matchstick. We were able to build a fire by the well and heat the water. Then we cleaned up, shaved, washed our dirty clothes, and hung them out to dry.

Learning Our Lesson

After everything was dried, folded, and stashed into our satchels, we were ready to leave our little "hotel" with all its services. But just before leaving, I glanced toward the old barn located farther up the field. I could see the top of a tree above the barn. "Elder Hales," I said, "I'm going to see if that is what I think it is—an apple tree."

Dashing around the corner of the barn, I was greeted by a tree loaded with apples. I picked one and took a bite. It was very sweet and juicy. Elder Hales and I sat under this beautiful apple tree and ate apples until we were full. We filled our satchels, our pockets, and even the inside of our shirts with apples. Then we went back to the little house, where we knelt down and gave thanks to the Lord. We knew He was watching over us and was aware of our needs. We knew He had prepared that vacant home for us. And we knew He was helping us heal from our wounds as we learned to rely on Him in faith.

Alden M. Higgs, "From Battlefield to Mission Field", *Ensign*, July, 2003, p. 24-27

Alma 19:33

Changed Hearts

President Joseph F. Smith said, "The feeling that came upon me was that of pure peace, of love and of light. I felt in my soul that if I had sinned—and surely I was not without sin—that it had been forgiven me; that I was indeed cleansed from sin; my heart was touched, and I felt that I would not injure the smallest insect beneath my feet *I felt as if I wanted to do good everywhere to everybody and to everything. I felt a newness of life, a newness of desire to do that which was right. There was not one particle of desire for evil left in my soul.*"

Gospel Doctrine, p. 96, italics added

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Sometimes men are born again miraculously and suddenly, as was Alma. They.... Completely reverse the whole course of their life almost in an instant. But for most members of the Church the spiritual rebirth is a process that goes on gradually. The faithful are sanctified degree by degree as they add to their faith and good works.

Bruce R. McConkie, *Promised Messiah*, 351